



Second Education Minister Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh with the students and officials at the Sukipt closing ceremony yesterday. Pic by Mohd Asri Saifuddin Mamat

Games to move outside Klang Valley in 2016

THE Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning Games (Sukipt) will for a first time be heading outside the Klang Valley in 2016 but may continue to allow the use of short-term foreign exchange students despite the furore they caused at the competition last week.

Sukipt came to a close at the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) campus in Shah Alam yesterday with a staggering 98 records broken and hosts UiTM taking the overall title for a first time with a haul of 64 gold, 44 silver and 34 bronze medals.

However, the champions use of foreign exchange students, although legitimate, had caused a number of other universities to raise the issue with the organisers and the press.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) finished runners up with 53 gold, 31 silver and 35 bronze while Universiti Malaya were third on 16-11-17.

Higher Education Sector sports division secretary Hazally Jali said no decision has been made on the use of foreigners for the next edition and will only be studied in detail at the Games post mortem this week.

He also disclosed that a number of potential hosts for the next edition of the biennial competition have already been identified.

"Sukipt will from now be held in the Klang Valley in alternate editions which means that we will be taking it outside KL for the first time in two years," said Hazally.

"The issue regarding these exchange students is not as simple as it looks and needs to be looked at in detail. There are both positives and negatives that come from their participation.

"With them being part of the Games they raise the level of competition and it gives our athletes the chance to experience competing against foreign opposition.

"These are also the same athletes we will be facing at competitions such as the Asean University Games (AUG) when they return to their own universities.

"This gives us a chance to benchmark ourselves and also their (foreign) capabilities prior to such tournaments."

Hazally added that the overall performance of Malaysian University athletes at Sukipt is a step in the right direction in terms of preparing for Malaysia's title defence at the Palembang AUG in December but made it clear that there is much work to be done if they are to again emerge Asean champions.

Malaysia had won the AUG on foreign soil for a first time in Laos two years ago.

"The number of Games records broken shows that there is a positive improvement in the performance of the athletes but we can never afford to be complacent or content with

what we have.

"Our AUG squads will be selected from the athletes that performed well here (Sukipt) and will be further trained and prepared for the Games by sending them to compete at events such as the Malaysia-Indonesia (Sukmalindo) and Malaysia-Thailand (Sukmathai) Games later this year."

As expected, UiTM long jumper Lukman Hakim Ramlan and swimmer Khoo Cai Lin of Taylors University were selected as the sportsman and sportswoman of the Games.

Cai Lin, who had just returned from a three-week injury break prior to Sukipt, was in dominating form in the pool and managed a commendable haul of six gold, three silver and two bronze, while Lukman Hakim's leap of 7.53m not only set a Games record but more importantly qualified him for the Incheon Asian Games later this year. **By Fadhli Ishak**